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Poems

John Agard

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Poems

Abstract

REMEMBER THE SHIP, FINDERS KEEPERS

John Agard

REMEMBER THE SHIP

As citizen
of the English tongue

I say remember
the ship
in citizenship

for language
is the baggage
we bring –

a weight
of words to ground
and give us wing –

as millennial waters
beckon wide

and love's anchor
waiting to be cast

will the ghost of race
become the albatross
we shoot at our cost?

I'm here to navigate –
not flagellate
with a whip of the past

but again I say remember
the ship
in citizenship

for is not each member
of the human race –
a ship on two legs

charting life's tidal
rise and fall

as the ship
of the sun
unloads its light

and the ship
of night
its cargo of stars
again I say remember
the ship
in citizenship
and diversity
shall sound its trumpet
outside the bigot's wall
and citizenship shall be
a call
to kinship
that knows
no boundary
of skin
and the heart
offer its wide harbours
for Europe's new voyage
to begin

FINDERS KEEPERS

This morning on the way to Charing Cross
I found a stiff upper lip
lying there on the train seat
Finders Keepers
I was tempted to scream
But something about that stiff upper lip
left me speechless
It looked so abandoned so unloved
like a frozen glove
nobody bothers to pick up
I could not bear to hand in
that stiff upper lip
to the Lost & Found
So I made a place for it
in the lining of my coat pocket
and I said
Come with me to the Third World
You go thaw off